

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 2000472 101 83 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: RELUCTANCE OF THE SALVADORAN MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO
PROSECUTE MILITARY OFFICERS FOR ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS
VIOLATIONS.

[REDACTED]

Approved for Release

NOV 1993

[REDACTED]

TEXT: 1. [REDACTED] MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL CARLOS EUGENIO ((VIDES)) CASANOVA CONFIDED TO OFFICERS OF THE SALVADORAN GENERAL STAFF THAT HE WAS TROUBLED BY GROWING INTEREST BY THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS GROUPS OVER AN ATROCITY ALLEGEDLY COMMITTED BY MEMBERS OF MILITARY DETACHMENT SIX IN SONSONATE DEPARTMENT. ((COMMENT: THE ATROCITY, SPECIFICALLY THE MURDER OF 18 PEASANT MEMBERS OF A COOPERATIVE FARM, TOOK PLACE ON 22 FEBRUARY AND EYEWITNESSES SAID THAT THE MURDERS WERE COMMITTED BY UNIFORMED TROOPS OF THE SIXTH DETACHMENT UNDER THE COMMANDER OF CAPTAIN SALVADOR ((FIGUEROA)) MORALES.)) VIDES CONFIDED THAT WHILE HE DID NOT DOUBT THAT FIGUEROA WAS GUILTY OF SUPERVISING THE MASSACRE OR THAT DETACHMENT SIX TROOPS WERE INVOLVED, HE PREFERRED THAT THE INCIDENT BE FORGOTTEN SINCE ANY PUBLIC MENTION OF THE CASE COULD ONLY ADVERSELY AFFECT THE IMAGE OF THE ARMED FORCES.

2. VIDES INSTRUCTED LIEUTENANT COLONEL RICARDO ARTISTIDES ((CIENFUEGOS)), CHIEF OF THE ARMED FORCES PRESS COMMISSION ((COPREFA)), TO PLAY DOWN THE INCIDENT AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE. VIDES SAID THAT HE HAD TRANSFERRED CAPTAIN FIGUEROA FROM SONSONATE TO MORAZAN AND STATED THAT HE HOPED THE MOVE WOULD SUFFICE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO PROSECUTING HIM. VIDES ADDED THAT HE HAD NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING THE PROSECUTION OF COLONEL ELMER ((GONZALEZ)) ARAUJO, SONSONATE DEPARTMENTAL COMMANDER, ALTHOUGH VIDES OPINED THAT GONZALEZ MAY HAVE ORDERED THE MASSACRE OF THE PEASANTS. VIDES STRESSED HIS VIEW THAT PROSECUTION OF MILITARY OFFICERS WOULD DAMAGE THE MORALE OF THE ARMED FORCES AS A WHOLE AND THE OFFICER CORPS IN PARTICULAR AND WOULD BE USED AS A PROPAGANDA ISSUE BY LEFTIST INSURGENTS.

3. ((COMMENT: IT HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY EVIDENT THAT GENERAL VIDES HAS NO INTENTION OF PURSUING THE ISSUE TO HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY THE ARMED FORCES AS WAS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS APPOINTMENT OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL DENIS ((MORAN)), A WELL-KNOWN RIGHTIST IMPLICATED IN THE 1981 MURDERS OF TWO U.S. CITIZENS IN THE SHERATON HOTEL, TO HEAD THE ENGINEER INSTRUCTION CENTER (CIIFA)).

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]